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Assistance to the Palestinian people**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/134, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, the needs still unmet and proposals for responding effectively to them.

In December 2017, the 2018–2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory was finalized, offering, for the first time, a three-year planning horizon. The Plan requires $539.7 million for 2018 to address urgent humanitarian needs throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.

The time frame for the disbursement of the $3.5 billion pledged in October 2014, at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, ended in 2017. As at 31 March 2018, the disbursement rate stood at 54 per cent ($1.884 billion). Through the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, reconstruction and repair of the 17,800 uninhabitable houses following the 2014 escalation of hostilities have continued, with more than 70 per cent completed. Over 20,000 people remain displaced.

In 2017, the Government of Palestine implemented the first year of the National Policy Agenda 2017–2022. To support that national development vision, the United Nations formulated its second ever United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the country and commenced implementation in January 2018. The financial resources required for the assistance provided through the Framework are approximately $1.26 billion over five years (2018–2022).

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/134, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at its seventy-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people, an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from April 2017 to March 2018.

2. Information on the political and socioeconomic situation is provided in several reports prepared by United Nations entities and submitted to various United Nations bodies, including the monthly Security Council briefings by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/72/13); and the reports of the Office of the Special Coordinator to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians of September 2017 and March 2018.

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several complementary strategic and resource mobilization documents. Under the 2018–2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, $539.7 million is sought for 2018 to provide access to basic services and support the ability of Palestinians to cope with and overcome the protracted crisis. Through the Plan, the United Nations and its partners will continue to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and protection assistance to 1.9 million vulnerable Palestinians.

4. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018–2022 presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities contained in the National Policy Agenda for 2017–2022. The Framework places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requires financial resources of approximately $1.26 billion over five years (2018–2022).

5. Throughout the year, the Office of the Special Coordinator continued its efforts to support the peace process and to promote coordination among the Government of Palestine, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

6. The reporting period was characterized by an increase in violence compared with the period from April 2016 to March 2017. Settlement activities continued but showed a decline in most indicators, and demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures also continued, albeit at a significantly lower rate. Divisions among the Palestinian factions persisted, despite Egyptian-led efforts to advance reconciliation, and have negative implications on the socioeconomic, humanitarian and social aspects of life in the occupied Palestinian territory, most acutely in Gaza.

7. While the international community continued to seek ways to advance peace, no tangible progress was realized. On 27 August 2017, the Secretary-General undertook his first official visit to Israel and Palestine, where he reaffirmed that there was no alternative to the two-State solution, based on relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and prior agreements.

8. On 6 December 2017, the President of the United States of America announced the decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, stating that final status issues, including the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem, remained for the parties to determine. Since then, there has been a marked increase in violence and tensions on the ground with increased numbers of clashes, deaths and injuries. Speaking at the Security Council on 20 February 2018, the President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, called for an international peace conference to be held by mid-2018, which would form a multilateral mechanism that would assist the two parties to the negotiations in resolving all permanent status issues, attaining full United Nations membership for the State of Palestine and mutual recognition between the State of Palestine and the State of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders.

9. From April to early December 2017, four rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel. Militants fired some 61 rockets between 6 December 2017 and 25 March 2018. Beginning in February 2018, there were at least six incidents of improvised explosive devices being placed by Palestinian militants, which exploded at the Gaza fence, in one case wounding four Israeli soldiers. On each occasion, Israeli forces responded with air strikes and shelling against Hamas targets. An improvised explosive device targeting the convoy of the Prime Minister of Palestine, Rami Hamdallah, in Gaza in March 2018 lightly injured six people. The Israeli military announced that it had destroyed five tunnels leading from Gaza to Israeli and/or Egyptian territory since October 2017. In one such operation on 30 October, 12 members of Islamic Jihad were killed inside the tunnel.

10. The planning, tendering and building of new settlement housing units continued, with most indicators pointing to a decline compared with the previous reporting period. The Israeli Civil Administration advanced plans for some 4,500 housing units in Area C settlements, down from over 7,000 during the previous period. An additional 1,400 units reached the final stage of approval before construction. Tenders for nearly 1,200 units were announced throughout Area C, a decline compared with some 3,500 units in the previous period. In occupied East Jerusalem, plans for some 2,300 housing units were advanced, a sharp increase over the approximately 1,500 units advanced in the previous reporting period, although no new tenders were issued.

11. On 12 October 2017, under Egyptian mediation, Fatah and Hamas reached agreement on a process to end the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

12. Despite statements by senior Fatah and Hamas officials reiterating their commitment to reconciliation efforts, the two sides have failed to demonstrate the necessary commitment to taking concrete measures to advance the process. These continuing divisions served to exacerbate the humanitarian and service delivery crisis on the ground.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

13. The economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory were characterized by stagnant growth in both the West Bank and Gaza and high unemployment in the range of 13.7 per cent in the West Bank and 42.7 per cent in Gaza at the end of 2017.

14. In Gaza, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita declined in all four quarters in 2017, while the unemployment rate increased steadily in the first three quarters of

the year before declining slightly in the fourth quarter, owing in part to seasonal agricultural work. The majority of the unemployed are younger than 30 years of age.

Humanitarian developments

15. The reporting period witnessed a significant increase in violence and casualties compared with the previous period. A total of 101 Palestinians were killed in direct conflict incidents (up from 60 the previous year), mostly by Israeli security forces. Sixteen Israelis, including seven members of Israeli security forces, were killed by Palestinians during the same period (up from 12 the previous period). Half of the Palestinian fatalities and over 70 per cent of the injuries occurred during three waves of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces: in July 2017, following a fatal shooting attack at one of the entrances at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount; in December 2017, after United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; and in March 2018, at the "Great March of Return" in Gaza.

16. In 2017, 15 Palestinian children (13 boys and 2 girls) were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip, all attributed to the Israeli security forces. Five children (2 girls and 3 boys) between 15 and 17 years of age were killed by Israeli security forces in the context of stabbing or reported stabbing attacks in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. One 9-year-old boy died of injuries incurred in Gaza in 2014, one 16-year-old was killed by the detonation of previously unexploded ordnance in a military training zone in the Jordan Valley, and seven children were killed by live ammunition used by Israeli security forces in clashes in Gaza and the West Bank.

17. In 2017, Palestinian children continued to be arrested and detained by Israeli security forces for alleged security offences, particularly stone and Molotov cocktail throwing during clashes. According to data from the Israel Prison Service, on average 312 Palestinian children were held in detention each month between January and December 2017. At the end of December 2017, of the 352 children detained, 244 were held in pretrial detention and/or during trial. The United Nations also documented five cases of children held in administrative detention in 2017.

18. The internal divide between the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and the Hamas de facto authorities in Gaza worsened in early 2017. In reaction to the formation by Hamas of a parallel institution to run governmental affairs, the Palestinian Authority reduced salary allowances of its employees in Gaza by 30–50 per cent in April 2017. The measure affected nearly 60,000 public sector employees. The Palestinian Authority also implemented an early retirement scheme, affecting a minimum of 4,000 security and 6,000 civilian personnel, and ceased the payment of stipends to at least 277 former political prisoners. Cuts in salaries and allowances greatly diminished purchasing power and the already limited economic activity. The internal divide also contributed to an energy crisis. In June 2017, the Palestinian Authority reduced payments for the 120-MW line that provides Gaza with electricity from Israel, bringing supplies down to 70 MW. Although the Palestinian Authority resumed payment for the 50 MW in January 2018, the improvement in electricity provision was short-lived, as the Authority ordered the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company to start covering part of the cost of the electricity purchased from Israel, at the expense of the fuel purchased to run the Gaza power plant. Consequently, electricity outages of up to 20 hours a day continue to undermine the provision of basic services.

19. During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 314 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 448 Palestinians, half of them children, and affecting the livelihoods of more than 3,200 people, a sharp decline from the 764 structures, 1,222 displaced, and

over 8,000 affected during the previous reporting period. Of the demolished structures, 41 were provided by donors as humanitarian assistance. Most of the structures were destroyed or seized for lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain in vast parts of Area C, including East Jerusalem. Palestinians can legally build on less than 1 per cent of Area C only, and the approval of new plans is far from meeting the needs of the Palestinian population.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

20. During the reporting period, access and movement restrictions on Palestinians imposed by the Government of Israel remained in place, including on land and sea access to Gaza, and across the Barrier, which restricts access by Palestinians to some 5 per cent of the West Bank, including most of East Jerusalem. Such measures, which Israel imposed, citing security concerns, impede Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities and severely constrain efforts to improve their conditions.

21. Only a small minority of Palestinians in Gaza remain eligible for exit permits through the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing, primarily patients, businesspeople and the staff of international organizations. The exit of Palestinians through Erez into Israel declined by almost 50 per cent in 2017, or 82,810 exits compared with 158,250 in 2016. The year 2017 witnessed the lowest approval rate (54 per cent) for permit applications for patients to exit Gaza through Erez since the World Health Organization (WHO) began monitoring them in 2008. By the end of 2017, there was an 85 per cent decline in the number of businesspeople with valid trader permits for Israel, compared with late 2015. The Rafah crossing to Egypt was open for only 36 days in 2017, compared with 44 days in 2016 and 32 days in 2015. Some 1,405 patients from Gaza crossed through Rafah in 2017; before the closure in July 2013, more than 4,000 Gaza residents had crossed Rafah to Egypt each month for health-related reasons. In April 2017, Israeli authorities announced the interception of an attempt to smuggle explosives into Israel by a Palestinian medical patient from Gaza, accusing Hamas of exploiting the movement of civilians for militant activities.

22. During the reporting period, the volume of goods entering Gaza from Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing decreased by 5 per cent compared with the previous reporting period (113,405 and 119,480 truckloads, respectively). The decline is attributable mostly to the worsening economic situation, a slowdown in reconstruction activities due to funding shortages, and the increase in the entrance of goods through Egypt. Israeli authorities reportedly foiled several attempts to smuggle contraband into Gaza concealed as civilian goods. Since the beginning of 2018, the Israeli authorities have approved thousands of pending residential cases, more than 130 private sector projects and over 1,200 requests for the import of items that Israel considers to be of dual civilian and military use.

23. Palestinian movement is still restricted in East Jerusalem, with West Bank identification card holders, except men over 55 and women over 50, needing permits to enter the city, and in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron (H2 zone), where more than 100 obstacles, including 18 permanent checkpoints, separate part of the H2 zone from the rest of the city. Nearly 30 per cent of Area C is designated as "firing zones" for Israeli military training, where residence or access is prohibited.

Barrier

24. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, continued its outreach and claim intake activities to "serve as a record, in documentary form, of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons

concerned as a result of the construction of the wall by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem" (para. 3 (a)). More than 66,500 claims and over 750,000 supporting documents have been collected. Claim intake activities are completed in eight out of nine affected Palestinian governorates, with work in Jerusalem at an advanced stage.

III. United Nations response

A. Human and social development

25. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and development assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory. That assistance targeted Palestinian individuals and communities in geographic areas beyond the reach of the Palestinian Authority, including East Jerusalem, Area C in the West Bank and Gaza. The United Nations collectively sought to invest its efforts in the most vulnerable subsections of the population most at risk of being left behind.

Education

26. During the 2017/18 academic year, UNRWA provided free primary education (grades 1–9) to 271,900 students (140,347 boys and 131,553 girls) in 275 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and a further 48,192 students (28,537 girls and 19,655 boys) in 95 elementary and preparatory schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

27. In Gaza, UNRWA constructed and reconstructed seven new schools. Four of them became operational during the 2017/18 academic year, accommodating about 6,000 students.

28. During the reporting period, UNRWA schools in the West Bank continued to participate in the inclusive education programme. In 2017, inclusive education activities at the school level in the West Bank included training for 475 staff, including school principals and teachers, in inclusive education practices, and for 170 school counsellors and teachers, focusing on recreational activities in support of student psychosocial well-being. The training was extended to the West Bank. In Gaza, 11 schools benefited from an inclusive education.

29. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) awarded 970 scholarships (513 to women) through the Al Fakhoora Dynamic Futures programme in Gaza. A total of 785 students were also engaged in different leadership activities. Economic empowerment projects targeting 224 students were also implemented.

30. UNDP completed the construction and rehabilitation of 46 schools and higher education institutions in Gaza, serving 119,000 students. UNDP also inaugurated the first child-friendly school in Gaza, designed in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

31. In East Jerusalem, UNDP enhanced the learning environment of 71 private schools and provided 44 additional classrooms through the construction of 2 new schools. UNDP also provided access to quality education for 28 private schools. In the West Bank, UNDP built 19 classrooms in schools and rehabilitated 94 educational units in 12 schools and 6 kindergartens in Area C and East Jerusalem. As a result, around 6,147 students (61 per cent of them girls) currently have access to a physically improved educational environment.

32. Across the occupied Palestinian territory, UNICEF provided capacity development for 100 preschool and first grade teachers and 50 principals on

appropriate early childhood development practices; trained 980 teachers on innovative teaching approaches to life skills and active learning; and strengthened the capacity of 620 teachers and 240 counsellors on detecting and addressing signs of violence and promoting alternatives to violence among students. In addition, with UNICEF support, 10,000 students in Gaza and the West Bank participated in student-led initiatives promoting non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution.

Health

33. During the reporting period, UNRWA operated 43 health-care facilities, comprising 24 primary health-care centres and 19 health points, as well as six mobile clinics, one hospital and one non-communicable disease referral centre, in the West Bank. These facilities collectively employed 823 staff. In Gaza, primary health-care services were provided through 22 health-care facilities that employed 954 UNRWA personnel.

34. In Gaza, UNDP completed the rehabilitation and renovation works of Al-Quds Hospital and the reconstruction and equipping of Atta Habib Medical Centre, benefiting over 650,000 people. In addition, UNDP concluded the installation of solar panels to provide energy to three hospitals and supplied needed medicine.

35. UNDP completed the upgrading of the chemotherapy department at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem, providing improved access to health care for 1,500 cancer patients annually. UNDP also improved the quality of health-care services for 30,000 patients in the West Bank (Yatta, Jenin, Alia and Al-Najah).

36. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reached more than 250,000 women with education on breast cancer and provided more than 3,000 mammogram screening tests to women in isolated areas of the West Bank and Gaza. The first comprehensive report on breast cancer and related services was published. The agency also supported the updating of protocols and work aids for sexual and reproductive health and introduced a human rights perspective into family planning services. Full-scale training on the updated protocols was completed in the West Bank and Gaza, with training delivered for 59 senior staff and Ministry of Health department heads. UNFPA also supported the updating of obstetric-care protocols, with training for midwives completed in 13 Ministry of Health hospitals in the West Bank.

37. UNICEF supported the introduction of innovative early childhood development and intervention services in 47 health centres, kindergartens and nurseries, and over 5,400 families with young children benefited from parent education, and 2,187 children ages 0 to 3 benefited from early detection and intervention services.

38. In Gaza, UNICEF supported the expansion of the Rafah and Khan Yunis Hospitals with new additional floors for neonate intensive care units since October 2017, benefiting 5,000 neonates, out of the annual expected caseload of 8,500 neonates. A third neonate unit in Bayt Jala Hospital, in the West Bank, has been expanded to double its capacity, to serve a total of 1,000 neonates on a yearly basis starting in June 2018.

39. UNICEF initiated the telemedicine approach by videoconference between Al-Makassed Hospital, in Jerusalem, with Al-Nasser Paediatric Hospital, in Gaza, which each month is helping 600 families with young children from Gaza to access quality health-care services when they are denied referral health-care services.

40. UNICEF supported the procurement of vaccines and related supplies and disposables to ensure the year-long provision of immunization services and coverage.

41. Ten clinics in Gaza benefited from exclusive breastfeeding promotion, reaching 145,453 lactating mothers. In 2017, over 40,000 lactating mothers benefited from counselling sessions in primary health-care facilities in the West Bank.

42. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supported the establishment of a national rehabilitation centre in Bethlehem and the preparation of protocols and policies for drug treatment. UNODC and WHO laid down the foundations to redirect drug treatment, rehabilitation and prevention services by providing updated data on illicit drug use and high-risk drug users.

43. WHO supported the implementation of the Patient Safety Friendly Hospital Initiative and supported the development of tools for improving the extraction and analysis of hospital-based data to improve the quality of health care. WHO continued to support the implementation of the Package of Essential Non-communicable Disease Interventions for Primary Health Care, as well as the family practice approach in primary care.

44. WHO worked with the Ministry of Health to strengthen core capacities for the International Health Regulations, focused on improving coordination, surveillance, laboratories, infection prevention and control and emergency preparedness and response. WHO provided technical support to partners with training on the right to health and implementation of a human rights-based approach to health.

Water and sanitation

45. UNDP supported enhanced access to safe water and sanitation for 200,000 people through the rehabilitation of damaged sewage and water networks across the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, access to safe and reliable drinking water was enhanced through the installation of 1,473 waterlines and 335 house connections. UNDP also improved access to water and sanitation services at the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park.

46. In 2017, UNICEF supported 65,277 people (32,775 in the West Bank and 32,502 in the Gaza Strip) through water network repairs, the installation of domestic water storage tanks and water tankering. Some 75,000 people in the Gaza Strip benefited from increased access to safe drinking water after the completion of the first phase of the southern Gaza desalination plant.

47. UNICEF supported a total of 166,766 people in gaining access to improved sanitation, and an additional 16,330 people benefited from the construction and rehabilitation of wastewater networks and sanitation household connections and services. The upgrading of the Jomizit El Sabeel sewage pumping station was completed in April 2017, benefiting 150,000 people.

48. Through the World Food Programme (WFP) e-voucher system, UNICEF provided hygiene kits to 17,146 households, benefiting around 205,750 people. UNICEF also distributed hygiene kits and cleaning kits to 102 schools in the West Bank, benefiting 35,700 students.

49. Approximately 160,000 students in 1,660 schools in the West Bank and 16,000 community members participated in the Global Handwashing Day campaign. UNICEF supported the rehabilitation and construction works for water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools, benefiting 60 schools attended by over 41,600 children.

Employment

50. During the reporting period, UNRWA continued to be the second largest employer in Gaza, with 13,000 employees accounting for some 8.5 per cent of the workforce. In addition, UNRWA construction projects and job creation programmes generated 10,000 jobs.

51. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported the business development of 26 women's cooperatives (950 members) and 4 companies led by women, through the provision of training in high-quality food processing, trademark, individual property rights and product labelling to increase access to national and international markets.

52. In 2017, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted five business training workshops for facilitators (3 in the West Bank and 2 in Gaza) targeting a total of 171 Palestinian teachers. ILO also trained eight training service providers and 18 trainers (9 men and 9 women) on starting businesses.

53. UNDP provided sustainable employment opportunities to 1,314 people and temporary employment opportunities and on-the-job training to more than 900 youth graduates. Capacity development programmes, including business planning, basic management training skills and specialized technical training, supported more than 400 beneficiaries. UNDP provided economic empowerment activities for 657 poor families, including start-up grants to 227 households (of which 29 per cent were headed by women). A total of 430 very small and microenterprises received financing (of which 27 per cent were owned and managed by women). UNDP also provided job placement opportunities for 129 university graduates (106 female) from East Jerusalem.

54. UNDP interventions generated over 410,000 opportunities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip through labour-intensive infrastructure.

55. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) supported the establishment of "reconciliation units" in six governorates in the West Bank, which provide legal support to women in conflict with their employers and reached over 1,000 women workers with an awareness-raising campaign during which women workers' rights under the Palestinian Labour Law were explained.

56. UN-Women provided support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in generating knowledge products related to gender gaps in certain sectors in the form of pamphlets and posters. UN-Women also promoted positive coping mechanisms for marginalized women through skills enhancement and partnerships to access income-generation opportunities.

Targeted social protection

57. During the reporting period, UNRWA distributed 395,123 food parcels to almost 21,000 Palestine refugee households in Gaza and supported 36,000 more beneficiaries through cash-based transfers in the West Bank.

58. WFP also provided emergency food assistance and enabled the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene items, in addition to school uniforms. WFP continued to support the Government's social safety net programme, under which 213,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank received food and cash-based transfers.

Culture

59. UNDP completed the revitalization of the Khan al-Wakalah historical site, creating 26 permanent jobs. A total of 18,146 Palestinian youth living in East Jerusalem participated in social and cultural interventions conducted in partnership with non-governmental organizations.

Food security and agriculture

60. FAO supported 1,870 farmers in cultivating over 5,800 dunums of high-value crops with improved, sustainable techniques and pest management. A livestock market was opened in Zahiriyah, Hebron, benefiting over 2,000 herders and enhancing both food security and food safety.

61. FAO installed 61 km of pipes to irrigate almost 10,000 dunums of land cultivated by 775 farming households, reducing water losses by an average of 36 per cent in Area C. In addition, almost 49,000 m^3 of water were made available through the construction and rehabilitation of 175 community cisterns serving 501 households.

62. FAO supported 670 farmers in cultivating guava while controlling the Mediterranean fruit fly, which led to an increase in production and quality and a reduction of pesticide use by 40 per cent.

63. In Area C, 190 dunums of agricultural land were reclaimed through UNDP, benefiting 400 Palestinians and increasing their income. A total of 21.3 km of water networks were installed and rehabilitated, benefiting 4,712 Palestinians.

Human rights, women, children and youth

64. During the reporting period, UNFPA established four safe spaces in the West Bank and Gaza, and nine hospitals and primary health-care clinics were upgraded to handle gender-based violence cases. Some 500 women identified as requiring specialized assistance were treated and referred to medical, social and/or legal services.

65. UNFPA conducted 560 outreach sessions to provide psychosocial support and awareness-raising to community and religious leaders on gender-based violence. Some 1,800 women benefited from dignity kits distribution, including survivors of gender-based violence in the West Bank and Gaza.

66. For the first time, UNFPA supported the production of a reality television show on gender roles, showing men doing domestic work. Some 3,000 people participated in activities marking the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign.

67. In 2017 in the West Bank, UNRWA supported 372 survivors (338 females and 34 males) of gender-based violence, domestic violence and/or other forms of abuse with individual counselling, while 19 critical/emergency cases were referred to non-governmental organizations for specialized assistance. In addition, 564 neglected elderly were given comprehensive assistance.

68. A total of 21,363 beneficiaries participated in a range of psychosocial awareness-raising activities in the West Bank that focused on gender-based violence, mental health, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, human rights and confronting sexual abuse.

69. In 2017 in Gaza, UNRWA extended support to 1,398 survivors of gender-based violence, with approximately 48 per cent of all cases seen by counsellors at UNRWA health centres. Awareness-raising sessions delivered by legal counsellors reached 4,033 beneficiaries (96 per cent women).

70. UN-Women supported the provision of quality gender-based violence services to women victims and survivors of violence in Gaza, including case management support to 102 people and awareness-raising on gender-based violence incidence and services (for 598 women and 82 men), as well as the establishment of a business incubator.

71. A one-stop centre has been established in Ramallah, which assisted 2,224 people, including 958 cases of children in conflict with the law and child victims of violence, and 1,266 cases of family violence.

72. The safe shelter supported by UN-Women in Nablus hosted a total of 128 women, in addition to 9 girls and 11 boys. In Gaza, UN-Women supported the Hayat Centre with financial aid for the provision of case management support to 199 victims/survivors of gender-based violence.

73. UN-Women supported the Government of Palestine in its reporting requirements for the first ever State report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and supported non-governmental organizations in drafting a shadow report.

74. UNICEF supported the training of 100 professionals on the application of the new Juvenile Protection Law, including judges and prosecutors, police, lawyers and child protection counsellors.

75. UNICEF also supported the child protection counsellors in the Ministry of Social Development through the provision of 121 coaching sessions on case management. In Gaza, information management systems were strengthened by training 98 child protection professionals on a web-based case management system.

76. UNRWA referred 41 cases of detained children in the West Bank to legal support and other services. Between January and September 2017, 11,223 children (5,615 girls) were supported by UNICEF structured psychosocial services and child protection interventions through 20 centres. A total of 2,882 caregivers increased their awareness of the protection of their children and positive discipline. A total of 75 counsellor rooms, 7 specialized counselling units and 25 play therapy rooms were refurbished, equipped and opened.

77. UNRWA provided mental health and psychosocial support to 57 Bedouin and herder communities in the West Bank that face settler violence, as well as the risk of forced displacement. During the reporting period, over 10,300 individuals received monthly access to psychosocial and mental health support.

78. UNDP increased youth and child participation in sport across the West Bank and Gaza through the establishment of the Palestinian Youth Sports League. Over 6,200 young people (25 per cent female) benefited from the initiative. In addition, six sports facilities and stadiums were built and rehabilitated.

79. UNICEF supported 17,447 adolescents with life skills training to improve their work readiness and civic engagement to be positive agents in their communities, with 10,802 of the youth leading community-based initiatives. A total of 4,533 adolescents were engaged in behavioural change campaigns to reduce violence in schools and communities, build trust between community members and adolescents, and improve social cohesion within and between communities.

80. UNFPA reached 10,376 young people with empowerment programmes and 6,000 young people through peer-to-peer training in universities. More than 1,000 young people participated in youth-led community initiatives. Some 450 young people and 20 decision makers were engaged through innovative new interventions such as a blog bus, an electronic mural, an online demonstration, smartphone films and a youth council.

81. UNRWA supported 383 female university graduates with leadership, life skills and self-development training. Subsequently, 200 female university graduates participated in a five-month work placement programme in different organizations and companies across the Gaza Strip.

Environment, housing and urban development

82. In Gaza, UNDP provided cash assistance for 294 families, with a focus on internally displaced people and women-headed households, and reconstructed 1,014 homes, benefiting 6,386 people.

83. UNDP improved access to housing for 600 disadvantaged people in East Jerusalem, with a focus on women-headed households. UNDP supported 176 Palestinians in starting new housing cooperatives in East Jerusalem. Some 30 awareness-raising workshops on legal, engineering, housing and social issues were conducted with the participation of around 2,750 Jerusalemites.

84. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported human rights mainstreaming in community-driven outline plans (spatial planning) in Area C. The Ministry of Local Government adopted a human rights impact assessment mechanism to inform 5 new local outline plans; 25 consolidated local detailed outline plans; 2 cluster plans for a group of communities; and 3 new city-region plans.

85. UN-Habitat accomplished spatial planning projects in three marginalized municipalities in the Gaza Strip (Wadi al-Salqa, Abasan al-Kabirah and Bayt Lahya) aimed at strengthening local and national institutions for the provision of public services.

86. UN-Habitat and UN-Women inaugurated the first safe and inclusive public space in Gaza using digital technology to engage women and youth in designing their own public spaces. A public space in Wadi al-Jawz in East Jerusalem was also developed by engaging more than 30 young people in the design process and will serve more than 40,000 residents.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

87. In 2017, the United Nations and its partners again focused most of the humanitarian assistance on Gaza. The United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian assistance in the areas of protection, shelter, food security, water and sanitation, health and nutrition and education, reaching approximately 57 per cent, or 0.9 million, out of the total 1.6 million vulnerable Palestinians targeted for assistance in 2017. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan mobilized $258.8 million out of the $551.9 million sought (47 per cent).

88. In response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, the Gaza urgent funding appeal was made in July 2017, with an eye towards meeting the most urgent requirements under existing 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan projects for humanitarian assistance. Under the 2018–2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, $539.7 million is sought for 2018, of which about 75 per cent of requirements are for Gaza.

89. Despite the increasing pace of reconstruction in Gaza, over 4,100 families (approximately 22,000 persons) remain displaced as a result of the 2014 conflict. Of those, 3,996 families are still in need of transitional shelter cash assistance. As at 28 February 2018, there was still a funding gap for over 3,100 destroyed housing units and over 55,800 damaged units.

90. The Mine Action Service cleared 71 large aerial bomb sites and supported the safe removal of 2,193 items of explosive remnants of war. The Service also provided risk assessment mitigation to 34 reconstruction sites on 221,280 m^2 of land intended for desalination plants, emergency shelters, public places, roads and buildings.

Emergency agriculture support

91. In response to the threat of displacement, FAO provided emergency in-kind support to 1,300 herder households in Area C, benefiting 8,000 people. Animal feed was distributed for 31,000 animals. FAO also assisted more than 1,300 farming and herding households through the rehabilitation of water cisterns and drip irrigation systems.

92. In Gaza, FAO restored access to water for 53 farming households through the connection of a water well to the electricity grid and the installation of drip irrigation systems. Some 70 food-insecure urban and peri-urban households in the Gaza Strip benefited from the establishment of home gardens with plant and animal production units.

93. FAO strengthened the resilience of herders' livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza through the preparation of almost 2,200 animal shelters for winter.

Emergency food support

94. Over 990,000 people in Gaza received food assistance through cash-based transfers in 2017. UNRWA distributed in-kind food parcels to 172,613 families (894,232 individuals).

95. In Gaza, WFP provided 81,500 food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians with cash-based transfers and 164,000 non-refugee Palestinians with in-kind food parcels during 2017.

96. In the West Bank, WFP and UNRWA emergency interventions provided in-kind food assistance to more than 37,000 members of Bedouin herder communities in 85 communities living in Area C.

97. In the West Bank, WFP provided food assistance to 104,584 food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians through cash-based transfers and 104,210 non-refugee Palestinians with in-kind food parcels during 2017.

Emergency education support

98. UNICEF reached 5,919 adolescents with life skills and stress relief activities and supported the protective accompaniment of 8,537 children and teachers to and from schools in Area C of the West Bank.

99. In Gaza, UNICEF supported 13,000 children through the provision of supplies and materials for schools, in addition to 3,296 children who benefited from remedial education.

100. The Mine Action Service provided explosive remnants of war risk education to over 41,000 at-risk persons in Gaza, including 27,315 children, and implemented a new risk education methodology aimed to empower at-risk populations and to build resilience. In 2017, there were 24 victims of explosive remnants of war, including 10 children. The Service also provided explosive ordnance disposal clearance support to all United Nations school facilities in Gaza.

Emergency health support

101. UNFPA provided 1,007 women with mammogram testing by mobile clinics, 360 women were provided with cash assistance (for referral treatment and transportation), 1,400 women were provided with support for medical screenings, and 800 women were provided with medicines, vitamins and supplements. Essential equipment was provided to the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations to improve breast cancer screening, diagnostic and confirmation capacity.

102. Through UNICEF support, as at 31 December 2017, 60 per cent of mothers and newborns of high-risk pregnancies received postnatal care within two days of birth through home visiting services by skilled midwives or nurses. Since 1 January 2017, 5,411 women and their newborns have benefited from home-based interventions on mother and child care, infant and young child feeding practices counselling, as well as on curative care.

103. UNICEF strengthened the emergency preparedness and response capacity in the West Bank and Gaza by training 154 front-line health practitioners.

104. UNICEF provided essential drugs and medical consumables to the Ministry of Health in Gaza to treat over 437,000 patients (145,716 pregnant and lactating mothers and 291,333 children under 5). Nearly 14 tons of essential drugs were delivered to the West Bank, benefiting a total of 7,600 women and children.

105. In 2017 in Gaza, UNRWA provided individual counselling to 11,088 at-risk children (49 per cent girls) and structured group counselling to 10,020 children attending UNRWA schools. UNRWA health centres provided psychosocial and protection interventions to 4,046 clients (503 men and 3,543 women), primarily in the form of individual and group counselling. A total of 92,750 Palestine refugees attended public awareness sessions convened in schools, health centres and other facilities.

106. In 2017 in the West Bank, UNRWA supported six mobile health clinics operating in 58 communities, serving a population of 117,227. A total of 2,456 Palestine refugees in the West Bank received individual and group psychosocial counselling services.

107. In February 2018, WHO delivered more than 5 tons of essential life-saving medical equipment and over 20 essential medicines and surgical supplies to Gaza hospitals to meet the needs of over 300,000 patients. WHO also provided fuel for generators for a period of six weeks to prevent the closure of 14 public hospitals and 14 non-governmental hospitals in Gaza.

108. WHO provided technical support to the Directorate of Emergency and Ambulance Services in the Ministry of Health for the development of contingency plans for 14 governmental hospitals and 13 primary health directorates in the West Bank.

109. WHO supported the Ministry of Health in improving quality of access to specialized mental health care, including the availability of essential pharmaceuticals for mental health. WHO trained 504 health practitioners working for the Ministry of Health and UNRWA and supported 11 of the 23 UNRWA primary health-care clinics in Gaza.

Emergency housing support

110. Under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) supported the import of much-needed reconstruction materials to enter the Gaza Strip. In 2017, 686,631 tons of cement were imported into Gaza. Project materials went to building or preparing for the rebuilding of homes for 23,553 Gazan families. The project used local suppliers, helping to boost the local economy.

111. UNOPS reconstructed 140 completely destroyed houses in 2017 and provided legal, financial and technical support to the families affected.

112. As at 28 February 2018, UNRWA had provided assistance to allow over 84,800 families to complete the repair of their homes in Gaza, while more than 3,000 families had completed or were in the process of rebuilding their completely destroyed homes.

113. In 2017 in the West Bank, UNRWA provided cash assistance to 58 Palestine refugee families following home demolitions by the Israeli authorities. A total of 654 Palestine refugee families received cash assistance and referrals to meet their humanitarian needs, following search-and-arrest operations by the Israeli security forces in Palestine refugee camps that led to damaged homes and trauma.

Emergency income generation

114. In 2017, UNRWA supported 19,695 people with short-term employment in Gaza. A total of 4,689 full-time equivalent positions were created that collectively injected $15.78 million into the local Gaza economy. In addition, over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs were created through UNRWA construction projects. UNRWA also employed 14,289 area personnel.

115. UNRWA provided critically required assistance through the provision of cash-for-work opportunities to 8,327 households (indirectly benefiting 44,630 individuals) in 19 Palestine refugee camps across the West Bank.

Emergency water and sanitation support

116. In Gaza, UNICEF upgraded six schools to serve as designated emergency shelters, including with the installation of toilets, showers, solar energy systems for lighting and roof tanks.

117. In response to the electricity crisis in Gaza, UNICEF repaired 141 damaged water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and 197 associated generators. UNICEF also provided water chlorination disinfection for 70 water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. UNICEF distributed hygiene kits through e-vouchers to more than 23,100 people at information sessions.

118. In 2017 in Gaza, UNRWA provided solid waste management services in all eight Palestine refugee camps, where 560,000 Palestine refugees reside. Similar services were provided by UNRWA in the West Bank in all 19 refugee camps, where 250,000 Palestine refugees reside. UNRWA also provided approximately 3 million litres of fuel to Gaza municipalities to operate water and wastewater assets; approximately 2 million litres of fuel for municipal solid waste management services; fuel and biological control agents to suppress the mosquito population at waste treatment plant sites; and fuel to run UNRWA water wells affected by power outages.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

119. FAO supported government institutions in undertaking legislative reforms, which resulted in the drafting of an animal health law, pesticide by-law, plant health law and food safety law and the approval of the National Strategy for Food Safety (2017–2022). FAO supported the establishment of a national plant health laboratory and initiated the formulation of the first food and nutrition security policy for Palestine. FAO and WFP also promoted a pilot of the food insecurity scale survey by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to monitor food insecurity.

120. ILO supported the launch of the Palestinian Social Security Corporation and has assisted in its delivery of a comprehensive social security system for Palestinian workers. ILO also supported the drafting of a law governing cooperatives.

121. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and its partners established a professional diploma training programme on supply chain management to serve the needs of Palestinian exporters, importers, customs brokers, government staff, young graduates, lawyers and other professionals. The programme was accredited by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in 2017.

122. UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women supported the Palestinian Bar Association, non-governmental organizations and university legal clinics in providing legal services to 14,337 people across the West Bank and Gaza.

123. UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women supported the Palestinian National Legal Aid Committee in developing a national legal aid strategy. UNDP provided capacity support to police and justice institutions through the establishment of a unified complaint system; launched a gender strategy for the Palestinian Civil Police; trained specialized security and justice personnel on gender-based violence and juvenile justice-related issues; and opened a pilot one-stop centre in Ramallah for female victims of violence.

124. UNDP supported the establishment and institutionalization of the first national revolving fund for promoting Islamic microfinancing. The capacity of partner microfinance institutions to integrate business development services within their finance and investment products was developed.

125. UNFPA supported the completion of the third population, housing and establishment census in Palestine. UNFPA supported the establishment of the gender-based violence information management system, which is currently used by 21 organizations in the West Bank and Gaza.

126. UNICEF supported the vocational training centre of the Ministry of Social Development in Gaza to promote the reintegration of children in conflict with the law. A total of 11 boys deprived of freedom in Al-Rabee Detention Centre were judicially removed from detention and enrolled in a government vocational training centre as an alternative to detention. In addition, 176 formal justice actors (145 men and 31 women) were trained on restorative juvenile justice.

127. UNODC provided support to the justice and security sector institutions. A forensic science laboratory was opened within the Palestinian Civil Police. UNODC also supported the Ministry of Justice in integrating graduates in forensic medicine. Three forensic clinics have been opened to deal with sexual and gender-based violence cases from a legal perspective.

128. UNOPS supported the Ministry of the Interior in civilian oversight of the State security functions. The Ministry of the Interior and 17 Palestinian security entities have re-engineered key processes to reinforce civilian oversight mechanisms in legal services, strategic planning, human resources, complaints processing, and media and public relations.

129. UN-Habitat supported the Ministry of Local Government in the development of *State of Palestine: Cities Report 2016*, the first in the series, which presented data on and analysis of the urban context in Palestine, indicating urbanization trends and forces and highlighting obstacles that hinder sustainable development in Palestinian cities.

130. WFP coordinated the establishment of the inter-agency emergency operations room in Gaza, and 160 Gaza government staff were trained on food needs assessments for internally displaced persons in emergencies.

131. WFP supported the capacity of the Palestinian Civil Defence and delivered emergency response equipment for floods response, firefighting and search-and-rescue operations, and set up three emergency operation centres.

132. WHO supported the establishment of the Palestinian National Institute of Public Health, which aims to strengthen information systems and data collection and utilization, including through the establishment of e-registries for cause of death, cancer, maternal and child health, road traffic collisions and mammography screening.

D. Private sector development

133. In Gaza, UNRWA disbursed 4,172 microfinance loans ($6.30 million) in 2017. Of those, 3,660 loans ($5,704,840) were provided to Palestine refugees and 1,788 loans ($2,051,340) were extended to women.

134. In the West Bank, UNRWA disbursed 10,343 loans ($14,554,716) in 2017, with Palestine refugees receiving 2,710 loans ($3,569,368). Women received 40 per cent of all loans, while youth aged 18–30 years received 39 per cent.

135. The UNRWA "G-Gateway" social enterprise continued to promote employment by opening the global market to information technology specialists. Each year, approximately 1,000 Palestinians graduate with computer-related degrees in Gaza. In 2017, it employed 101 beneficiaries and provided 300 employment opportunities through its freelance services.

136. UNDP is supporting the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park microenterprise and small business owners and entrepreneurs in increasing their outreach, effectiveness and efficiency of business development services. UNDP is supporting the establishment of a profitable and sustainable business model from the photovoltaic-generated electricity (solar energy) in the same location.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

137. Under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, collaboration and coordination between the numerous donor and United Nations forums continued during the reporting period. The humanitarian country team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. The United Nations country team continued to coordinate its development programming, in alignment with the priorities under the National Policy Agenda.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

138. The Palestinian Authority contained the overall deficit to 7.8 per cent of GDP in 2017 despite a decline in total net revenue, owing to a high reduction in expenditures as a proportion of GDP. However, the fiscal situation remained precarious with declining donor support. To finance the deficit, the Palestinian Authority continued to resort to borrowing from banks within the regulatory limit. During the year, donors provided $544.5 million to the Palestinian Authority in external budgetary support and $175 million in development finance. Arab donors accounted for 26.7 per cent of external budgetary support, and international donors accounted for the remaining part. In March 2018, the Palestinian Authority approved a unified (Gaza and West Bank) budget for the occupied Palestinian territory for 2018, which envisages a total spending of $5.1 billion, with a financing gap of around $490 million.

Donor coordination

139. The reformed local aid coordination structure went into effect during the reporting period, conferring greater ownership on aid coordination to Palestinian government institutions that currently chair each of the 15 sector working groups.

140. The coordination of humanitarian assistance and advocacy continued to be led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs during the reporting period.

141. During the reporting period, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held two regular meetings, on 18 September 2017 in New York, chaired by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Børge Brende, and on 20 March 2018 in Brussels, hosted by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Ine Eriksen Søreide; one extraordinary session was held on 31 January 2018 in Brussels, also hosted by Ms. Mogherini and chaired by Ms. Søreide.

V. Unmet needs

142. In 2017, UNRWA was not able to raise the necessary funding for its programme budget and ended the year with a shortfall of approximately $126.5 million. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects also operated with large funding gaps. Through its 2017 Palestine emergency appeal, UNRWA continued to provide basic humanitarian assistance; however, funding levels reached 38.1 per cent only. Following the January 2018 announcement by the United States that it would withhold its contribution in 2018, the projected programme budget shortfall stood at $446 million. On 22 January 2018, UNRWA launched its 2018 emergency appeals to raise $808 million for the West Bank and Gaza, as well as for the Syrian regional crisis. A ministerial conference, attended by the Secretary-General, was held in Rome on 15 March 2018, entitled "Preserving dignity and sharing responsibility: mobilizing collective action for UNRWA". The conference was convened by Egypt, Jordan and Sweden to help to alleviate the financial situation of UNRWA and saw pledges of approximately $100 million. Currently, the UNRWA funding shortfall is less than $250 million.

143. Should UNRWA, owing to a lack of funding, be forced to reduce, or suspend completely, its core and emergency services in Gaza in 2018, the impact would be significant, notably for 272,000 children who would lose access to education, on primary health-care as well as neonatal care and other life-saving services for over 1 million Palestine refugees, and on 1 million Palestine refugees living in poverty who would lose food assistance.

144. Of the $3.5 billion pledged at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine in October 2014 for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, only 54 per cent ($1.884 billion) has been disbursed. To complete the reconstruction, an estimated $244 million is still needed, including $200 million for the rehabilitation of 3,000 destroyed houses and 56,000 damaged houses, $13 million for the reconstruction of a destroyed hospital, $20 million for the energy infrastructure and $11 million for the water infrastructure.

145. Given the continued humanitarian needs, the 2018–2020 Humanitarian Response Plan requires $539.7 million for 2018, of which over half, or $286.5 million, is also included in the UNRWA emergency appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory. At the end of the reporting period, only 5.4 per cent, or $29 million, had been raised.

146. The *2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview* estimates that, of the 4.95 million Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territory, 2.5 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2018. Of those, 1.6 million Gazans, 1.1 million children under the age of 18 and 1.4 million Palestine refugees will require humanitarian assistance in 2018. In 2018, at least 1.9 million Palestinians will experience, or are at

risk of, conflict and violence, displacement and denial of access to livelihoods, among other threats.

147. Moreover, United Nations agencies are seeking $1.26 billion over five years to support development programming in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

VI. Challenges

148. The absence of a political process aimed at ending the conflict continues to be the single largest impediment to Palestinian development.

149. Continued Israeli settlement expansion, demolitions, closure, access and movement restrictions and other aspects of the military occupation continue to have a severe impact on the humanitarian, social and political life of the Palestinian population and its ability to exercise its fundamental rights. Continuing acts of violence, including acts of terror, and incitement perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion. The political division between the West Bank and Gaza places severe obstacles to addressing humanitarian needs and restoring a political horizon.

150. Development and humanitarian funding to the State of Palestine continued to decline during the reporting period. Significant UNRWA funding reductions in the next reporting period further demonstrate the need for strong donor coordination.

VII. Conclusions

151. The operational context for the work of the United Nations in the reporting period was increasingly difficult as a result of the challenges outlined in the present report. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 1860 (2009) and 2334 (2016), an end to the occupation that began in 1967, and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.